SOME ARGUMENTS AND Considerations,

Serving as a full

ANSWER

To that

Grand QUESTION,

Whether Men can Will and Do otherwise than what they do?

IN

Answer to, and Occasioned by,

A Late

DISCOURSE,

CALLED,

A Refutation of that Asserted Position of Absolute Necessity.

By *R. H.* a Well-wisher to all Men.

London: Printed for the Author, and are to be Sold by *W. Marshall*, at the Bible in *Newgate-street*. 1700.

SOME ARGUMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS, &c.

Queſtion.] *Well met, old Friend! What News abroad? What new Books are come out lately?*

Anſwer.] [illegible] out each Week; and tho' I do not read [illegible] happen'd to ſee one, a mauling Piece, if it anſwers the Title.

Queſt.] *Say you ſo; Pray what was the Title?*

Anſ.] It was *A Refutation of the Atheiſtical Notion of Fate, or abſolute Neceſſity.*

If that be it, I have ſeen it already.

Queſt.] *Well, and what do you think of it?*

Anſ.] I think it doth not anſwer the Title at all.

Well then, if you be for *Neceſſity*, you and I ſhall differ, for I am for *Liberty*.

Well then, for diſtinction ſake, I ſhall call you *Liberty*.

Liberty.] *Well*, Neceſſity, *what have you to ſay againſt* Liberty?

Neceſſity.] I ſhould have had nothing to have ſaid againſt *Liberty*, if the Author had proved that there is

any such thing; but I have some Remarks to make on his Book; and, first, the Title contains a false Charge.

Lib.] *Why, what part of the Title is false?*

Nec.] That the Notion of Fate is atheistical.

Lib.] *How do yo prove that a false Charge?*

Nec.] The first Article of the Mahumetan Creed saith, I believe that there is but one God; and the sixth saith, That Good and Evil only happen, because God hath fore-ordain'd them, having writ on a Table from all Eternity things that are, and are to be; therefore, all true Mussle-men, and many thousands more, that believe there is a God, and that he determines whatever is and shall be, cannot be Atheists, and therefore, such a Notion cannot be the Notion of an Atheist, nor an atheistical Notion.

Lib.] *But, perhaps he means only, that this Notion will lead Men into Atheism?*

Nec.] Let him mean what he will, 'tis plain, no Man can be an Atheist, while he is of this Opinion.

Lib.] *But what do you say to the whole Subject of his Discourse, viz.* That all things are determined by an absolute Fatallity; and, That God himself and all Creatures whatsoever are necessary Agents, without having any Power of Choice, or any real Liberty in their Natures at all.

Nec.] It is an incongruous heap of Stuff, for the first Clause may be true for any thing he hath shewed to the contrary; but that God himself is a necessary Agent (except he have tyed himself to it for his own Pleasure, or the Good of his Creatures) I see no reason to believe; and for the rest of it, it hangs so together, that what both he and I pleads for may be true, for all Creatures may be necessary Agents, and yet have such a real Liberty in their Natures, as may enable them to Choose; for all Creatures that I can observe, have a Power by Nature to Choose what is agreeable to their Natures and to do otherwise would be to hate themselves, which they

they cannot do in Thoughts, whatever their Actions may tend to.

Lib.] *Wherein do you then differ?*

Nec.] To come to the chief Points of Difference; Page the 9th, he quotes *Hobbs*, saying, *That nothing can take beginning from it self, but must do it from the action of some other immediate Agent without it; if therefore a Man have a Will to something which he had not a Will to before, the Cause of his Will is not the Will it self, but something else not in his own disposing.* And Page 11, he [illegible] *that nothing can take beginning from it self; the Will of Man took beginning from God, and yet it will not in the least follow, that the Cause of a Man's Will is not the Will it self, but something else not in its own Disposing; for he thinks the Acts of the Will take their Original from the faculty of Willing; and that tho' the first Will, or power of Willing, took its beginning from God, yet the Acts of the Will take their Original from that free Power of Election, which God hath placed in our Natures; and therefore we say,* saith he, *that voluntary Actions take their Original,* &c. And Page 14, he saith, *He is properly Free who hath the Power of Determining in himself, and when all Requisits are ready, so that nothing shall extrinsically either hinder from, or compel him to Act; can yet choose whether he will Act or not.* Thus, if a Man hath Pen, Ink, and Paper, and a place to write on, his Hand well, and at liberty, and understands how to Write, he hath all things present that are necessary to produce the Effect of Writing, yet he can nevertheless not produce that Effect, because he can choose after all whether he will Write or no.

Lib.] *And what can you say to all this?*

Nec.] I allow, That he that hath all Requisites for Action, so that nothing shall either hinder him from, or compel him to Act, and can choose whether he will Act or not, is free from Necessitation. But I deny, 1ff, That those Requisites, which he reckons up, are all

that's requisite. And, 2*dly*, That when all Requisites are present, he can choose or refuse to Act. I grant, That God hath placed in our Natures a Faculty of Deliberating, and also a Power to Will; but not that this Power to Will, includes all that's requisite in order to Willing, so that where there is one there may be the other.

Lib.] *Why may not the Power of Willing produce the Acts of Willing?*

Nec.] I shall state the Question so, that the Decision thereof may cut the Thread for ever in this case: The Question is, Whether that general Faculty, or Power, which God at first planted in Human Nature, whereby he enabled Man to Choose, Will and Desire whatever should seem best to him during the whole course of his Life doth include in it, or furnish a Man with whatever is requisite, whereby he may (have Power to Choose, I do not say, for that it doth furnish him with, but) Choose and yet have liberty to Refuse what is set before him.

Lib.] *You have stated the Question fairly, and I think the case so plain, that you must make a very nice Distinction to evade the Consequences.*

Nec.] I shall make no other Distinction but what your Author made before me; for Page 10. and 13. he blames *Hobbs* for not distinguishing between the *Power* of Willing, and the *Act* of Willing, and therefore he shall have enough of it, he shall never need to blame me for confounding 'em together. And first, to shew him that there may be Power to Will, and yet no Act, Choice or Desire, I shall only need to inform him, that by the aforesaid Power, which God planted in our Natures, we have at all times, if we be wakening, a Power to Will in readiness: And then, secondly, I shall leave him to judge whether he can use that Power at any time, but when he hath some occasion, that's not of *his own Procuring, and at his own Disposing*: And, third-

thirdly, if not, what Proof this is that a Power to Will, that lies asleep till it is stirred up, is all that's requisite, whereby that Power may be put into action; if a Man cannot put those Powers, which God hath planted in his Nature, (whereby he is able to Will, Desire and Choose) into action, unless, besides that Power, there is also some occasion, *&c.* whereby it may be moved, then that Power is not a sufficient Cause, nor any Cause at all of a Man's Willing, Desiring and Choosing: But a Man cannot put those Faculties into action, neither doth any Man do it, without such occasions as are not of his own procuring, and at his own disposing; therefore that Power which God planted in a Man, neither is nor can be the Cause of a Man's Willing, Desiring and Choosing: And what think you now?

Lib.] *I think you have shuffled your self from under the strength of this Argument, by bringing in another Cause of Willing*, viz. The Occasions of Willing, *as you call them; but you do not think you have proved an* absolute Necessity?

Nec.] No; but if you understand it, you may see that I have proved, That there can be no Liberty from that Argument, because, though we have a Power to Choose, yet that Power cannot be put into Action without something else out of our Power, which that Power doth not *govern.*

Lib.] *But he hath more Arguments to prove a Free-will by.*

Nec.] He hath none but what either fall under this, and are disproved by what I have said, or else such as will do him no good; for his Argument, that Pen, Ink, and Paper, *&c.* are all that's requisite for Writing, is disproved here; for, 'tis *self-evident* to thousands of Men, that have those Requisites, and cannot Write, till they have, besides those which he reckons, something to *move* them to it.

Lib.] *But he proves a Free-will from the use of Reason,*

Nec.] No, but he should have done it in his 7th Sermon; but doth it follow, that because some Men have the use of Reason *sometimes*, that therefore all Men have it at *all times*? If all Men had the use and benefit of Reason at all times, they would not do Evil; but they do Evil, therefore they have not the use of Reason (so as to be said to have a Free-will) at all times by it.

Lib.] *But he proves Free-will from Page the* 19th, *from the experience of all Mankind, which are conscious of having a free Power of Deliberating in many cases, which way is best for us to proceed, that we can act this way or that way, according as we like best.*

Nec.] This is very true, and one of these Proofs will do him no good, for all Men that I know of, have such a Power of Deliberating, Willing and Choosing; but the word (*Free*) ought to have been left out, because, we can forbear to act at all, when we are not *moved at all*, yet, when we are moved, that is, when we have *sufficient Occasions*, we are willing, and cannot forbear being so, because that which *disposeth* of our Wills is present.

Lib.] *Then you own a Will, but not a Free-will?*

Nec.] Yes, and all the Reason in the World, for 'tis not more plain to all Mankind that we have a Will, than it is that our Will doth not *govern it self*, but is govern'd; and that it never *acts*, but when besides it self something else is present to put it into action.

Again, if Men depend as much on God for their Motions and Opperations as for their Being, then they can do nothing towards those Motions and Opperations, but must depend on their first Cause in all cases as much; and in like manner, as a Sword depends on its Maker, as much for its being a broad, narrow, long or short, good or bad Sword, as for its being a Sword.

But Mr. *Goodwin*, in his *Redemption Redeem'd*, saith, *There is no Created Being, or Second Cause whatever, but de-*

Goodwin

depends on the First, which is God; and this as well in the Second as in the First Act, i. e. *As well in the Motions and Operations issuing from, and performed by every one of them, as in their simple Being and Existence it self.*

Now let any Man make it intelligible, *How a Man's Actions can be his own, or determined by his own Power and Choice, while this Confession is good and true?*

Lib.] *But there is one Argument I have heard against your Opinion, that is, That though the Will cannot choose without a Motive, yet the Faculties of the Soul in general, can make themselves Motives, and then act by the mediation of these Motives, or make an Object to seem good, and then desire it.*

Nec.] If there be any such Power in Man, it must either be the effect of some Mode or State of Body, or some Property of the Soul: If it be the effect of some Mode, it must be natural, and whensoever present, it would of necessity produce or occasion such a seeming Goodness to attend such an Object as would unavoidably produce a Desire thereof: Thus some particular Mode or State of Body, is accompanied with Hunger, and Hunger doth unavoidably produce a Desire of Food; but I hope you do not expect Free-will from this Argument. And if the Soul doth *make* those Faculties, whereby those Objects which it Desires, Hopes, Fears, *&c.* become desirable, *&c.* then the Soul doth not *depend* on any superior Power for the making those Faculties, by which *only we can know that we have a Soul*, to wit, the Faculties of Hoping, Fearing, Desiring, *&c.*

Again, If the Soul can make an Object to seem good, desirable, *&c.* when there is no *Reason* why it should seem so before the Soul *makes it seem so*, then the Soul can make the thing not only to *seem good*, but also to *be good* (for, whatever seems good is good) to him, and thereby *governs both the Nature of Men and Things*,

or

or the reasonableness of Things being desirable, hopeful or fearful, and so leaves nothing for *God to do with the Minds of Men*; for it must do all, or else it signifies nothing at all, it must make the Object to appear good, and yet keep it self at liberty whether it will desire it or not; for if he hath not Power also to forbear desiring it when he hath made it seem best, he hath catcht himself, as ill as if some other Agent had laid a Necessity on him; if he be independant in making the Object to seem good or bad, without any Cause or Reason at all, and also independant as to any inclinations of Desiring when he had made it seem good, then he is equal at least with God, if not above him; but if he can do but one of those Acts, he will still be bound by the other. Again, if the Soul made the desirableness of her Objects, and her own Will to desire 'em, 'tis probable he might foresee whether that Desirableness would continue or not, and make nothing desirable but what would continue both desirable and attainable.

But since so few of those Objects which she desires that do *continue desirable and attainable*, therefore I will leave any Free-willer to judge whether the Soul doth make the seeming *Goodness* of things, and the *Reasons* thereof.

Again, If it were in the Power of Man to make good things seem good at all *times*, he might for that very Reason (because it would seem one good thing among the rest) make it seem good as well *at one time as at another*, to provide and secure himself against what may happen from the four last things, *viz. Heaven, Hell, Death and Judgment*, which are things always alike dangerous, because *always* alike uncertain as to the time when they may overtake us; but these Considerations have not always such an Effect, and such Impressions on our Minds as it were to be wished they should have, therefore it is not in the Power of Man to *procure Rest*

and

and the exercise thereof, but that it is the effect of Grace, and when Grace hath refined and improved our Nature, good things seem good to us, till then ill things seem good to us, but neither Good nor Ill is made to seem good nor ill *by us*, but to us.

Lib.] *This seems to take off an Objection, which it brings into my Remembrance, namely, That tho' we have not a Free-will to do Good, yet we have a Free-will to do Evil.*

Nec.] We have a Will (as I said before, till our Natures are refined) to do Evil, but here again the word (*Free*) ought to have been left out, because 'tis evident, that we do not those things out of a Principle of *Freedom* or Liberty, but the quite contrary, *viz.* a State of Slavery, 'tis the Effects of natural Corruption, out of which we are not able to free our selves till God *Refines* our Nature, by some means accountable as some *sanctified* Affliction, *&c.* or some unaccountable way, as the *inward* working of Grace upon our Minds, thereby blunting the edge of our Appetites.

Lib.] *I think God suffers us to fall by the Corruption of our Wills.*

Nec.] I know not what you can mean less by suffering you to do an ill thing, than by appointing you as Instruments to do it.

If, First, you grant that God knows the Wills of Men, and can *turn them whether he pleases* (tho' neither you nor I knows how he should do it, if they have no dependence on him,) and if God did not know and could hinder what he suffers, he could not be said to suffer it; and if he knows what will be the event, and yet gives his consent; and for some *Reason, approves and thinks fit to continue them in health and being while they act*, and without *sustaining* Nature in her due course and vigour, they *could not Act*: And do you think that God would suffer Men thus willingly, or thus willingly suffer them, to will and to do of their own Pleasure, if he had not some end which he thinks fit to carry on thereby? And if it were

were thus, what would this sort of Willing fall short of Acting upon the Wills of Men, especially when Acting in God is supposed to be nothing but a Willing that a thing shall be done?

Lib.] *There is as much Difference as between willing that a thing may be, and willing that a thing shall be.*

Nec.] And this Difference will vanish all at once for this Reason, *viz.* That if God doth not Will that a thing *may* be, it cannot be, and if he Wills it *shall* be, it can but be, for if Men be not *First Causes*, they must be Second, Third, *&c.* and what are these more than Instruments in the Hands of a *First Cause?*

Lib.] *But doth not this Distinction of God's Willing that a thing may be and that a thing shall be, import that a thing may be, or it may not be?*

Nec.] I did not approve of that Distinction, only I supposed it, to shew that I thought it would be of little use to you: However, we being ignorant of what God wills, till his Will makes Some Impression on our Faculties, and supposing he can move our Wills, we say such a Thing may be, or it may not be, for any thing we know, because we neither know any thing of it, nor can do any thing in it, till we have further Orders and Motives from without; and do you think that our being ignorant of what God Wills, can be any Proof that he doth not *Will* what he suffers, or weaken the Belief of what by Experience we already know, *viz.* That we never Will, till something out of our own Power moves us.

Lib.] *I think we shall be worse put to it with you than with* Hobbs, *because* Hobbs's *Opinions were something more Extravigant than yours, and therefore easier to take hold of.*

Nec.] I shall not here justify *Hobbs* in any thing, but this Notion against Liberty, and in that part of Mr. H. Argument with *Hobbs*, he came as poorly off as ever M. did, for to Page 22. he quotes his Adversaries, granting that they are really Free, because they had granted it

they had a Power to deliberate whether they should do such a thing or nor, so that deliberating and determining are all one with him, any thing rather than not be a free Agent forsooth: And Page 19 and 20, he quotes a Man, convincing another Man that he could walk, by getting up and shewing him that he could walk, which was all that he drove at, or disputed about: The thing in dispute was not, whether he had the occasion of walking within himself, or whether he could walk without occasion, but whether he would walk. But this *sharp*, or rather short-sighted Philosopher can see no difference between *walking, and the occasion of walking*, and therefore poor Man, thinks that this very instance will baffle all the pretended Arguments for Necessity; but he has exposed himself and one of his pretended Arguments for Liberty to very little purpose, but to confirm the Opinion he argues against, Page the 21. he argues for as great a Power as can be conceived to be in GOD, and declares himself ignorant of any other Cause, to determine Mens Actions, and calls their free Will the cause of those Actions, and saith they depend on it; and yet in the foregoing Page it is nothing but an Opinion, that there is a Liberty of Action in humane Nature, and this free Power or Liberty which we find in us, we call the Will, by which we understand not any particular act of Volition, but the Power or Faculty of Willing: now I think it will be hard to find an Animal in all the Universe that has not a Liberty of Action, and a Power of Willing; but I am astonished to hear that one that pretends to be a *Divine* and *Philosopher*, should at the same time own himself *grosly Ignorant* of any Cause, these Actions have without him.

Lib.] *He doth not sure mean that God hath not the Disposing of Mens Wills at all?*

Nec.] I cannot gather from his Book any such Acknowledgment, and therefore in this Case of Free-will he talks either like a Fool or an Atheist.

Again, Page 13. he quotes an Argument of *Hobbs*'s, viz. *That Cause is a sufficient Cause, which wanteth nothing to produce its Effect*: But such a Cause must also be a necessary one, for had it not necessarily produced its Effect, it must have been, because something was wanting for that purpose, and then it could *not have been sufficient*: Now how do you think he argues against this Iron-sided Argument?

Lib.] *I cannot tell, 'tis like he is not afraid of* Hobbs's *Arguments.*

Nec.] Yes, as sure as he was alive.

Lib.] *Why do you think so?*

Nec.] Why, any Body that sees how he doth mannage it, may be sure of it, for he made hard shifts to run away from it, and is not yet, nor never will be got clear of it.

Lib.] *How was it then?*

Nec.] First, he saith, without giving any Reason for it at all, That all this Argument of *Hobbs*'s proves for his purpose nothing at all.

Lib.] *And had he no Reason to say so?*

Nec.] None at all.

Lib.] *I cannot believe that, what did he say?*

Nec.] First he charges *Hobbs* with proceeding on in his former Errour of confounding the Act of Willing, with the Power of Willing.

Lib.] *And why did you say he did not Reason at all? I think this was a fine Saying.*

Nec.] Yes, it was well enough contrived, to scatter something behind him, to entertain such Readers as understood no more than himself, while he was making his escape from under the Claws of an Argument, that would have frightned a much wiser, and more hardy Disputant, than ever he is like to be.

Lib.] *Why, he tells you that* Hobbs *was in an Errour for confounding Things and Words*, &c.

Nec.] And I say, he was in an Errour for saying that

Hobbs

Hobbs confounded the Act of Willing, with the Power of Willing; for there was no ſuch Words in the Argument there cited, and he could not confound ſuch Words, when there was neither ſuch Words nor Meanings, but was only ſpeaking of the Sufficiency of a Cauſe.

Lib.] *And did he take no notice of the Argument as to that point?*

Nec.] Yes, he took notice of it, to ſhew that he was afraid of it.

Lib.] *How doth it appear, that he was afraid of it?*

Nec.] Becauſe he ſaith, he will not now *diſpute* what *Hobbs* ſaith of a *ſufficient Cauſe, being a neceſſary one.*

Lib.] *But he ought to have Diſputed it, when he had quoted it on purpoſe to Diſpute it.*

Nec.] Well, it may be, he thinks ſuch a looſe ſhuffling way of Talking, is good Diſputing, and perhaps, thinks others will think ſo too, or elſe he would have been aſhamed of it; but he will make amends for it and fill up that ſide with ſomething which he hopes yet will take for a ſufficient Argument againſt a ſufficient Cauſe, being a neceſſary one.

Lib.] *And is that any better, for I am almoſt ſick of his Arguments, and his Arguing at this rate?*

Nec.] You muſt know that in Page the 9th, he had quoted Three or Four of *Hobbs*'s Arguments, and ſome of 'em he had ſlubbered over ſlightly, ſo as not to hurt them, and ſome of 'em he had left untouch'd, among which was this, *viz. So that whereas 'tis out of Controverſie that of voluntary Actions, the Will is the neceſſary Cauſe; and by this which is now ſaid, the Will is alſo cauſed by other Things whereof it diſpoſeth not, it follows that voluntary Actions have all of them neceſſary Cauſes, and are therefore neceſſitated.* Now when he had left theſe Arguments in Page the 9th, which had not only proved, that the Will was neceſſitated; becauſe the Cauſe of a Man's Will, was not the Will it ſelf, but ſomething

else, not in his own *Disposing*, but also that voluntary Actions are necessitated, and having some how or other got to Page 13, was as I shewed you before, unluckily fallen in with this knotty Argument that shews why a sufficient Cause must be a necessary Cause, he bethinks himself of a way to kill two Birds with one Stone, and get out of one Argument, by steping back and taking hold of one Clause of a Sentence; which taken alone, might be wrested thus, That *the Will is the Cause of voluntary Actions*; and would have us to believe, that *Hobbs* had granted the Will of Man, was a sufficient Cause to produce an Effect. And having foolishly supposed, that *Hobbs* had granted the Will of Man as a sufficient Cause; he at last as foolishly loses all he had, only in Immagination got, by granting, that the Will of Man did produce the Effect *necessarily*. Now if he had taken the Sentence together, he could but have been foyled, and now after all his Shifts he is notoriously fool'd, and *Hobbs*'s Argument affords this plain Inference, *If nothing takes beginning from it self, but must do it from the Act to some other immediate Agent without it: And if the Cause of a Man's Willing, is not the Will it self, but something else not in his own Disposing, and if the Will is also caused by other Things whereof it disposeth not: Then the Will of Man is not a sufficient Cause to produce any Effect, and are therefore produced by the Action of some other immediate Agent:* by whose *Mediation* whatever we Choose, *Will or Desire, to have, to do, or to be, seems best at that time, and under those present Circumstances*, and could not seem otherwise, because there was nothing present, by whose means any thing else could seem *better*, without which nothing *else could be Willed, chosen or done.*

Lib.] *If you do no not run too fast, so as to be called back again, you will soon have done, for this is a home touch?*

Nec.] You may call me back, if you can disprove what I say, and give Reasons for what you say, or take me a stumbling any thing of this Nature, without assigning the Cause. Lib.]

Lib.] *But will not some Men say, that all this amounts to no more than that when a thing is, it is; but that it doth not prove that Men are previously necessitated to Will, &c.*

Nec.] Yes, it doth if you consider it; besides, if you observe carefully the working of your Mind when you deliberate, it will be self-evident, that by how much the seeming goodness of an Object is previous to the desire of that Object, by so much the Necessity of the Will is previous to the Act of Willing; that is, so *long* as the Object seems *best and fittest to be chosen, before the Will doth desire it, so long before the Will doth desire that Object it is under a Necessity to desire it.* And tho' this previousness be short and quick, they are grasping at any thing that seems good, yet every Man is conscious, that the *seeming Good* was the *Instrumental Cause of the Choice*, and was therefore so long before it, as to be perceivable; besides, if the Object did not seem best some *time* before the Will did choose it, the Will could not choose or desire it; for the Will always stays to see the seeming bestness, before it can desire; So that it is clearly made out, that the Will was *necessitated* to make that Determination *à Priori*, and that it could have made no other, because no Agent did occasion or produce a liking of any other.

Lib.] *All your Arguments still run on some supposed Agent, or Mover of the Will besides itself, and whereof it hath not the* Disposing.

Nec.] I suppose an Agent whereby the faculty of Willing is *improved* into Acts of Willing, *by Motives, Occasions and Instruments,* (*as* Mediums) *appointed by that Agent, or first Mover:* But, of this first Mover of Mens Wills, Mr. *H*[illegible] pretends great Ignorance, to which I say, *That, if there is no Cause of the Determinations of Mens Wills, but what is within their Wills, then God doth not govern the Wills of Men.* But Mr. *H*[illegible] in Page 21, *declares himself wholly Ignorant of any Cause that doth determin Men to Action, therefore Mr. H*[illegible] *is wholly Ignorant of God's Governing the Wills of Men.* And I leave

any

any sober Man to judge, whether my Notion of God's *Governing the Wills of Men, or Mr.* H[illegible]*s, of Mens being their own Movers, be more Atheistical.*

Lib.] *But we (whatever Mr.* H[illegible] *doth) do acknowledge every good and perfect Gift to come from God.*

Nec.] But if you allow that they come from him, you do not allow that they can signifie any thing, by what he can do, since he can but present Objects to your liking, it is your Will that must give the *finishing stroke*; without which all is to no purpose, for if your Will, as to the particular Acts of it, be Independent, it must be self-sufficient, and such a faculty, that without it, nothing can be sufficient, Grace is not sufficient for you, for if God Wills, that the *Hearing or Reading* such a Sermon, or Book, shall have a more lively Impression on your Mind at one time, than at another; tho' your Body was in an equal State; yet his Will must *stoop* and give way to your Will; he is the *Instrument*, and you the *principle Agent*, or else quite contrary.

Lib.] *But you charge us too hard now; for we pray to God, that he would incline our Hearts to keep his Laws.*

Nec.] But then you should relinquish your Notion of Free-will, or else you can mean nothing by such Prayers, unless it be that yours depend on God, and on your self at the same time, and that it can be in and out at your own disposing at the same time, or at your own and God's disposing at the same time, or that God and you must be independent by turns, but he must not be independent in any Act of his Will, except you please to allow that he is so: however, I believe those that made those words of the Common-prayer, and the Tenth Article of the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of *England*, (according to which, by their Ordination, your Clergy are obliged to Preach) were good sober Men, or at least had good sober Thoughts at that time; the Article holds forth that Man *cannot turn and prepare himself to Faith and Prayer without the Grace of God*,

God by Christ, preventing us that we may have a good Will and Working with us, when we have that good Will: But the Brains of your Beardless Clergy are in such a Hurry, and byass to serve some Opinion or Intrest, that they cannot think; for while the Faculties of Men are imployed in advancing other Mens Opinions for Self-intrest, and are content with a Supposition of the Truth thereof, 'tis not likely they should *find, or search much after Truth.*

Lib.] *But you are so hot in Reflecting, that I doubt you have no more Arguments; If you have, let's have them?*

Nec.] You have had enough already, if you know when you have enough; however, take what follows, *viz.* That Faculty, Power, or Agent, whereby the general Faculty of Willing is put into Action, is nothing *in and inseparable from the Object*, considered in its own Nature as an Object, nor in and inseparable from the Faculty of Willing: Because, if that Agent, which puts the Power of Willing into an Act of Willing, where in and inseparable from the Object before us, or in and inseparable from the faculty of Willing, or that Power whereby we are enabled (but not moved) to Will, and then it would follow that *so long as the Object continues before us, and the Faculty of Willing continues in us*, which is all our Lives, we should continue to Will and Desire that Object: But, we do not continue to Will and Desire the same Object, so long as it continues before us, and the Faculty of Willing continues in us; therefore that Power, Faculty, or Agent whereby the Capacity of Willing is improved into Acts of Willing, is not the Faculty of Willing, but some other Agent, *differing both from the Object and the Faculty of Willing*; which Acts, as a *Medium*, between the Object and the Will, to unite or bring together the Object and the Thing desired; which is done in *Fruition*. Again, That Cause cannot be a sufficient Cause if any thing is wanting, without which, the Effect cannot follow: But,

But, without this Agent whereby the Object before as to be chosen, can seem best, *that can be had at that time*, the Effect cannot follow.

Therefore without that Agent to mediate and produce that seeming Goodness, nothing can be a sufficient Cause; for Confirmation of which, Mr. *H[illegible]* in Page the 111th of his 7th Sermon saith, *All Men desire good, and cannot do otherwise*; if they cannot do otherwise, then they cannot Will and Choose, when that Qualification is absent.

But a first Principle, quoted by Mr. *H[illegible]*, as self-evident, makes that Qualification necessary to make a Cause sufficient: Therefore according to Mr. *H[illegible]*, a Cause is not sufficient without the presence of that qualification, whereby whatever is afterwards desired, may seem best before-hand.

From whence it is self-eviden[illegible], and allowed by Mr. *Harris* that to produce (for Instance) the Effect of Writing, 'tis not sufficient to have in Reading as Materials. Secondly, *A Power to use 'em.* Thirdly, *Knowledge how to use 'em.* Fourthly, *A supposed Capacity of being made Willing, by a Fifth*, viz. *The Mediation of some immediate Agent, whereby the Act of Writing is represented, as fittest to be done at that time*; the four first are not sufficient to make up a Cause, without the *5th Requisit*, which produces a 6th, *viz.* An *Act of the Will, and that 6th produces a 7th, viz.* the Act of Writing: Now the four first Wheels, if they be present, *and in good order*, are always put in Motion by the 5th, which when it begins to move, it thereby produces the 6th and 7th Motion, *viz.* Willing and Acting. Now if this Agent, number 5 (which I suppose the only free Agent in the Universe, as being utterly out of the disposing of any created being,) be not present, I leave any considering Man to judge, if he can Will, Choose, or Desire at all, or that it being present, he can forbear Willing, Choosing, *&c.* or first, whether it be not so necessary, that

that *without it, no Cause can be sufficient.* And 2d, whether the presence of this Qualification doth not make the Effect unavoidable. And 3d, whether this Agent is not wholly out of Man's disposing. And 4th, whether all this doth not amount to a Proof of an absolute Necessity; that whatever is, must be, and cannot be otherwise; because the Spring of Willing and Acting is not in Man; and therefore whether a Man may not as well choose, whether the Wind shall blow, as choose otherwise than he doth: Nor need I any *Postulata*, nor to gather the strength of my Argument from a supposed, or unproved) Weakness of that of my Adversary's, for instead of saying, (if Man hath the disposing of his own Will, then God cannot, *&c.*) I might have said, 'tis self-evident, to every discerning Man, that the Spring, Source, Motives, and Occasions of Willing, are not procured and dispenced with by his own Power; and that if he sits or lies down, 'tis impossible he can rise again, till something or consideration not of his own procuring comes into his mind, and lays an absolute Necessity on him, which he cannot at that time dispence with; And what Reason have you to believe, that God did or could fore-ordain a Sacrifice for Sin, and not likewise ordain Sin for that Sacrifice to Triumph over?

And since the seeming Truth of a thing hath the same Effect on the Faculty of believing, that seeming good hath on the Faculty of Willing or Desiring, therefore of the truth of this Notion, I can be as certain, as I can be of my own Being. For I can be as certain what I think true, and why I think so, namely, because it appears so to the best understanding I at present have: And also, what I think best, and why I think it so, because it seems so to the Faculties which I at present have to judge by, and I cannot make it seem otherwise, because I neither *made my self, nor govern the Agent, and Instruments whereby I am moved.*

Lib.] *But what will become of the Consequences that are*

tend this Notion, for if it be true, it will be a ſad Truth?

Nec.] That's ſtrange, that Truth can be of ſo ſad a conſequence; but if it ſhould be ſo, ſince I did not make it true, but only find it ſo, the Conſequences cannot lie at my door.

Lib.] *But you ought to be concerned about 'em.*

Nec.] If I had time, I would be ſo far concerned about 'em, as to ſee whether none be charged on it, but what belongs to it.

Lib.] *There is enough belongs to it*, for it perfectly deſtroys all the Notions of Good and Evil, Rewards and Puniſhments, and all manner of Obligations both to divine and human Laws; and conſequently, is the moſt deſtructive Principle that can be advanced to the good of Society; for if all Things and Actions whatever, are abſolutely neceſſitated, and cannot poſſibly be otherwiſe; there can be no ſuch thing as Right and Wrong, Good and Evil: and why ſhould any one trouble themſelves about paying any Veneration to the Deity, if he could not help making them juſt ſuch as they are?

Nec.] Here is one falſe Conſequence built upon another. But let us ſee, how much of this will vaniſh by ſuppoſing God to be a *Free Agent*; and that there is a Relative Good and Evil, attending the Actions of Men towards one another, and that theſe Things, whoſe properties, and thoſe Actions which by *Means* of the *Circumſtances* of Mankind, are *uſeful* and *beneficial* to Mankind, have a *Relative Goodneſs*, that is, they are Good ſo far as they relate to the *good of Mankind*, and the *Univerſe*, and farther than this, *you can ſee no Good in any thing whatever.* For Inſtance, For a Man to ſave the Life of his Father, Mother, Wife, or Child, would be counted a good and reaſonable Action; and there is this Reaſon, *viz.* Becauſe they are Relations that are or may be of uſe to him; but if he cannot ſave one of them, but by the loſs of his own Life, where lies the Goodneſs of it then, *is it Naturally, Morally, Eternally, and in it ſelf*

Note this &c
Father Mother

self Good, for a Man to kill himself, to save another, or to save another by killing himself; and if such an eminent Act of *Charity*, such an Act of *Generosity* may be otherwise than Good, then things are only good by their *Circumstances*.

Again, To enquire whether the Evil of things consist in the *Act* or the *Will*, or in neither, let us see whether it would be Evil for a Man to desire to have the use of a Wife, or really to have the use of one: The Answer will be, That it cannot be said, that it either is or is not, unless you have recourse to the Circumstances of the Parties, if the Woman he desires be under the Relation, and Circumstances of a Wife of his own, then 'tis not, otherwise 'tis Evil, because he will thereby become a means to alinate the Mind of the Woman from the Love of her Husband, which he can never restore: Thus you see that things are only *Good* or *Evil* by the *Circumstances* of things; the same thing which differs not, either in the *Act* or *Desire*, from another thing which is Adultery, may be just and honest; to kill another Man in his own Defence, ceases to be Murther, and to save a Man's Life by destroying his own, is made Self-murther, and all this by the Difference of Circumstances only, yet it is to be observed, that these Circumstances are sacred and indispensible by Man, because Man neither made those Circumstances, nor can alter one of them, for the Nature of 'em was settled by God, when he made those Creatures, which have such a Relation to, and Dependence on one another. Thus you see I have made way for *Good* and *Evil*, *Right* and *Wrong*.

Lib.] *But this Doctrine admits of no Rewards and Punishments, nor Sin against God.*

Nec.] It neither helps nor hinders them, because it knows not how God will dispose of his Creatures in a future State, and therefore believes no more than what it can give some Reason for, and supposes that God will either make some Allowance for the *Frailties* of *Human*

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Nature, or that they may be atoned for by the Sacrifice of *the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*; and thinks with those that have writ with most Caution and Depth of Thought, (*viz.* Dr. *Tillotson*, Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, of Hell Torments,) that God will manage Things *fairly in that Day*. But tho' it is not severe in censuring as some, yet it doth not hinder us from believing it convenient to provide as far as in us lies for the worst that may happen, only it knows no Reason for that Branch of Repentance that supposes us to have *resisted his Will*; yet I may be sorry that I am encompass'd about with such a Cloud *of Infirmities*, and *pray* that I may be *delivered from this Body of Corruption*; because Observation and Experience shews me, that I am loaded with Inclinations to such things, which tho' they be pleasant when I desire them, have trouble behind 'em, and have been led into such Inconveniences, that I may feel the Effects of these Inclinations still, and therefore not *knowing what may be hereafter*, I desire God (when my Mind is well-affected) that he would continue that Zeal, and Warmth of Devotion, whereby I may choose and desire such things as *he knows* are and will be *best* for me to all intents and purposes; and because we do not only receive *Good* at the Hands of God, but Evil; we may therefore desire God to *remove* ill Things from us; and when he doth so, we may give him *Thanks* for confirming those benefits and favours on us; because for any thing we know, he might have done *otherwise*: Thus we may hope for Good, because God is Good, and sometimes doth us Good in a remarkable manner, and we may be afraid of Evil, because God is Powerful, and doth afflict us sometimes, and gives ill *Agents Power to hurt us*. And thus we may *in all our Ways acknowledge a Supream Power*, by what Names or Titles soever dignified or distinguished; and when our frail Natures have betrayed us into Folly and Inconvenience, we may (notwithstanding this Notion) with Hu-

Humility (since we cannot observe that Fretting either brings Good or removes Evil) submit and acknowledge our Weakness, and desire supernatural Assistance, that we may not only do well for our selves, but also, that we may do something that's *good and useful to our Generation*; and to do it, *so as to do nothing to any one, which we would not except of from any other in a like Case*: than which, there is no higher Attainment our Natures are capable of in this State, for it includes *forgiving Injuries, passing by Affronts*, &c. which do cross the *grain of our Natures* (which, till improved, differs not from those of *Brutes*) *as much as any thing can do*: So that there is nothing that relates to *God, our Neighbour, or our Selves*, but may be perform'd by Men of this Opinion: *If God gives Grace*, and if that be *wanting*, it is not the believing that we are free Agents that can *supply its Defects*, any more than the contrary *Notion* can hinder its Operation and Effects.

Lib.] *But to what purpose do you reckon up what parts of Religion your Opinion admits of, since you have no reason to boast of any thing you do?*

Nec.] I am not about to Boast, for, *What have we, that we did not receive?* I only observe to you, that tho', when we do *Well*, we cannot do *otherwise*, yet our Opinion doth not hinder us from doing *Good*; neither can it make us to do *Evil*, because it leaves nothing for us to do, but to *believe*, that we can do nothing, but as Instruments, and hope that God will *consider our Natures, that we are but as a Wind that passeth away and returneth not again*, and that therefore he will *heal our Backslidings*, and prepare us for himself, whereby we may be *fitted to resign* up our Souls into the Hands of God, who gave 'em to be dispos'd of as he thinks fit.

Lib.] *But why should Men be punish'd for committing Murthers, Robberies*, &c. *when they could not do otherwise?*

Nec.] It cannot be thought *unjust* or *unreasonable* for Men to make Laws, which, *for ought we know*, may

prove a Defence to us, and a Caution to others, which might otherwise do Evil.

Lib.] *How can that be, since you intimate that God appoints every thing they do?*

Nec.] If God doth appoint every thing Men do and suffer, he may appoint the *Means* as well as the *End*, every *Action* being a *Means* leading towards some *End*; and, forasmuch as God doth bring his *Ends* to pass by *Means*, therefore we *know* not but that those Laws may be Instruments to bring to pass some *good End* of that nature, and perhaps it doth many times when we cannot *perceive it*: Besides the Majestrate can have no Design against any one in making such Laws, because they neither force any one to break 'em, nor are certain that any one will break 'em, and *Self-preservation* is a sufficient *Motive* to ballance that Objection, and the *use* of all probable Means for the attainment of any good End, is infer'd from our *Ignorance* of God's Decrees, *&c.*

I think what I have said takes off all Objections that lies against this Notion, from any Laws *Divine* or *Human*, and therefore I need not take notice of his four or five Pages of Consequents, yet in answer to 'em all, I shall tell him, That if he had but had a grain of Sence, he might have seen that this Doctrine could not be *Mischevious*, *Pernicious*, *nor open a Door to any Wickedness*, because it supposes, that none could enter but what was *decreed either from Eternity*, or like time, cut out for us by parcels as we Act it.

For to suppose that this Doctrine could do any harm to Church or State; were to suppose that the Doctrine it self could dispose of the Wills of Men, which would first destroy *his Notion of Mens Wills*, *disposing of themselves*. And *Secondly*, It would destroy the Doctrine of *Necessity it self*, which supposes Mens Wills to be disposed off by some Superior Agent. For an Opinion that

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a Man is Neceſſitated to Will and Do whatever he doth, neither Neceſſitates nor Inclines him to Will or Do, becauſe (tho' he confoundes 'em) Believing and Deſiring are different Things.

Thus, if a Man believe that Pampering his Body would be a means to procure Luſt, and that Abſtinence and a ſevere courſe of Diet, would be a means to procure a Sober, Religious Temper; yet Experience ſhows, that without ſome Motive or Occaſion (beſides the Opinion) to *put* him upon the Uſe of thoſe Means, he cannot uſe the Means leading to either of thoſe Ends: So weak and inconſiſtent is he in his Writing and Diſputing, that I would have him to leave it off, and not be ſo much afraid of loſing Time and Pains by incouraging Vertue, and diſcouraging Vice, becauſe he is but a Man, and therefore knows not when good Advice will be loſt, and when not; if therefore he can adviſe Men to live ſo as that they may not be afraid to die, he knows not but that God may deſign Good thereby.

What I have ſaid to diſprove Liberty of Will, will be found Self-evident to all that obſerve what it is they do, and why they do it. And if theſe Arguments be demonſtrative againſt a Free-will, then it were better (if it pleaſed God) that ſo much of our Sermons, Diſcourſes, and Religious Performances, as are uſually ſpent in declaring and proclaiming a Free-will, were laid out in (ſolemnly as at the Sacrament) confeſſing that our Help is only in God, and with Humility, beſeech him by his preventing and aſſiſting Grace, to rectifie our Rugged, Revengeful, Luſtful, or otherwiſe Troubleſome and Dangerous Inclinations and Appetites: I ſay, this would be more becoming *Creatures under our Circumſtances.*

Lib.] *How do you think that Men were at firſt produced, whether did the Earth bring 'em forth by Nature, like Plants,* &c.

Nec.] As to the Productions of Men, the ingenious Mr. *Bently* hath ſaid almoſt all that can be ſaid, and the Conſideration of the Frame and Texture of Human Bodies, being ſo well fitted for the Ends and Uſes for which they ſerve, is a ſufficient Argument to me; that beſides the Materials, there was an inteligent Being to diſpoſe thoſe Materials into this Frame, wherein we now ſee 'em; for if the Earth, or the Chaos, with heat and moiſture, could produce Animals, Vegitables, *&c.* When there was neither Eggs, Sperm, nor Seeds, then *dry*, or *calcined* Earth, with Heat

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and Moisture, wherein we can be sure, that there is no Eggs, Sperm, nor Seeds, might do it again;

But I know by Experience, that it cannot do it, and therefore I conclude that it never did it.

Again, if the Chaos could have produced Plants in the Figure and Porportion of Men, and that the Motion of Vegitation had been sufficient to *Animate*, *Ripen*, and *Loosen* 'em from the Ground,

Then we might *expect* to see some such Effect still, some stately Oak or Elm might come forth, and perform the Exploits of a Giant or *wild Indian*, and other Plants might come forth and Reason together among those of their own sort at least, as well as Brutes; but we never see things happen thus, so that *Matter* and *Motion*, *Heat* and *Moysture*, are not *Sufficient* to produce Men, *&c.* And therefore I conclude, that the Frame and Texture of the Bodies of Annimals, and that Principle that Acts and Annimates them, was the Effect of a Wise and Powerful Being.

Lib.] *And do you think that our Souls will not die with our Bodies?*

Nec.] If that thinking Faculty which Annimates our Bodies do not *Waste* and *Decline* as our Bodies do; but that generally this Faculty grows, is improved and inlarged in its Notions and Apprehensions of things, as the Body declines, and many times the Declension of one, is the Growth and Increase of the other, as is seen by Mens *Desires*, *Hopes and Fears growing more Vigorous and Intense*; when the State of the Body is so Impaired, as not to be able to make known its Thoughts, by Words and Actions as before, but only by Signs, then 'tis probable our Souls are more than a Temperament of Body, and do not depend on it for their Beings, but will exist after the Dissolution of our Bodies, and be Immortal.

And since we cannot Act without a Motive, I wish this consideration of our Souls, out living our Bodies, may prove one, and that God would be pleased to set it forward, so that thereby we may provide against the worst (and then we shall be prepared for the best) *that a future State can bring with it.*

Finis.

ERRATA.

IN *page* 17. *line* 13. *for* and quick, they are, *read* and quick as Thoughts are, while they are. *p.* 19. *l.* 35. *for* Thing desired, *r.* Will. *p.* 20. *l.* 19. *for* Reading, *r.* Readiness.